

## Message Text

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21

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UNCLAS MANILA 12700

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TPHY, RP

SUBJ: PHILIPPINE PRESS STRESSES SELF RELIANCE IN EARTHQUAKE

RELIEF EFFORT

1. THE PHILIPPINE PRESS HAS FOCUSED FOR PAST SEVERAL DAYS  
ON RELIEF EFFORTS UNDERWAY IN MINDANAO FOLLOWING DEVASTATING  
EARTHQUAKE AND TIDAL WAVE. PRESS PLAY AND EDITORIALS  
HAVE EMPHASIZED SELF RELIANCE AND LACK OF NECESSITY TO ACCEPT  
FOREIGN AID.

2. AUGUST 20 PAPERS GAVE HEADLINE PLAY TO PRESIDENT MARCOS'  
CABINET-MILITARY BRIEFING ON DEVELOPMENTS IN MINDANAO.  
THE "DAILY EXPRESS" HEADLINED "LETS HELP OURSELVES --  
FM RELEASES P25 MILLION FOR QUAKE RELIEF." ALONG WITH  
OTHER PAPERS THE "DAILY EXPRES" NOTED THAT THE PRESIDENT  
"WHILE EXPRESSING GRATITUDE FOR THE HELP EXTENDED BY THE  
CIVILIAN POPULATION, LET US NOT LOOK AS IF WE ARE  
BEGGARS." THE "DAILY EXPRESS" WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT  
THE PRESIDENT SAID "THE MAIN THRUST OF THE REPAIR AND  
REHABILITATION PROGRAM SHOULD BE BASED ON SELF RELIANCE,  
CITING THE EXPERIENCE OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE, WHO UNDER-  
TOOK RELIEF WORK IN EARTHQUAKE-STRIKEN AREAS WITHOUT  
FOREIGN HELP... ACCORDING TO THE PRESIDENT HE HAS  
RECEIVED COMMENTS TO THE EFFECT AS IF IT LOOKS AS THE  
CHINESE EXPERIENCE SHOWS UP THE SHALLOWNESS OF  
OUR EFFORTS HERE IN THE PHILIPPINES.... IT WAS UNDER-  
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STOOD THAT THE PRESIDENT WILL FOLLOW THE CHINESE FORMULA,

MAKING USE ONLY OF LOCAL RESOURCES IN REPAIR AND REHABILITATION." THE ARTICLE WENT ON TO NOTE WITHOUT COMMENT THE OFFERS OF AID FROM FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS, INCLUDING THAT OF THE U.S. IN THE LATTER INSTANCE THE ARTICLE NOTED THAT "WHILE THE MEETING WAS GOING ON, THE PRESIDENT WAS HANDED A LETTER FROM THE U.S. EMBASSY MAKING AVAILABLE THE FACILITIES OF THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER USS TRIPOLI, WHICH HAS FOUR C-130S AND A HALF DOZEN HELICOPTERS.... HE INSTRUCTED THE MILITARY TO MAKE NOTE OF THE OFFER BUT BEFORE ANY REQUEST FOR THE USE OF THE FACILITIES IS MADE, IT SHOULD BE CLEARED WITH ME. "OBSERVERS TOOK THIS TO MEAN THAT THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT MAY NOT MAKE USE OF THE OFFER UNLESS IT IS REALLY NECESSARY."

3. THE AUGUST 20 "BULLETIN TODAY" IN AN EDITORIAL, "A TIME TO HELP" STATED: "FOR THE PHILIPPINES, THE EARTHQUAKE WAS THE MOST DISASTROUS NATURAL CALAMITY WITHIN MEMORY. IT WAS MORE DESTRUCTIVE THAN ANY TYPHOON OR VOLCANIC ERUPTION...MAYBE THERE IS NEED FOR A NATURAL CONFERENCE ON MINDANAO INITIATED BY THE GOVERNMENT BUT WITH FULL PARTICIPATION BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR...EACH HOUSEHOLD AND EACH FIRM MAY BE REQUESTED TO SET ASIDE AN AMOUNT WITHIN ITS MEANS TO HELP THE VICTIMS OF THE EARTHQUAKE...IF THE COUNTRY CAN BE THUS MOBILIZED FOR THE REHABILITATION EFFORT, IT WILL NOT PROBABLY TAKE TOOK LONG A TIME FOR THINGS TO RETURN TO NORMAL...THE EFFORT HAS TO BE WELL ORGANIZED UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF GOVERNMENT. THIS WILL NEED THE SERVICES OF MANY CIVIC-SPIRITED CITIZENS AND GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL." AUGUST 21 EDITIONS OF ALL PAPERS REPORTED ON PRESIDENT AND MRS. MARCOS' INSPECTION TRIP TO THE DEVASTATED AREAS AND THE PRESIDENT'S ASSURANCES OF "FULLEST AID" TO THE QUAKE VICTIMS. IN HIS AUGUST 21 COLUMN HEADLINED, "RP WON'T SINK WITHOUT U.S. AID," "DAILY EXPRESS" COLUMNIST TEODOR VALENCIA COMMENTED: "WHEN THE PRESIDENT INDICATED THAT THE U.S. OFFER OF THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER TRIPOLI FOR RELIEF WORK IN MINDANAO SHOULD NOT BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT PRIOR CLEARANCE FROM HIM, HE INDICATED THAT THE OFFER MAY NOT BE ACCEPTED. FILIPINOS UNCLASSIFIED

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ARE HURT BY TOO MANY REFERENCES IN THE U.S. PRESS ABOUT AID TO THE PHILIPPINES TO CREATE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE PHILIPPINES WOULD SINK WITHOUT AMERICAN AID. PERHAPS THIS IS AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY TO SHOW THE USA THAT WE CAN DO VERY WELL BY OURSELVES EVEN IN TAKING CARE OF MAJOR CATASTROPHES." THE "BULLETIN TODAY" OF AUGUST 21 CARRIED LEAD EDITORIAL ENTITLED, "ATTITUDE TOWARD AID," WHICH READ AS FOLLOWS:

"THE PEOPLE AND THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE  
GRATEFUL FOR ALL THE AID AND PLEDGES OF HELP BEING  
RECEIVED FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES ON BEHALF OF THE  
EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS. WHEN A DISASTER OF THIS MAGNITUDE  
OCCURS, THE REACTION OF OTHER PEOPLES IS TO HELP THE  
VICTIMS IN SOME WAY. WE NEED NOT SPURN AID VOLUNTARILY  
GIVEN. WHEN AID IS RECEIVED IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES,  
WE SUBSTANTIATE EXISTING GOODWILL...NEEDLESS TO SAY,  
WE CAN ONLY RELY ON OUR OWN RESOURCES AND EFFORTS. IT  
IS ONLY THROUGH OUR EFFORTS THAT WE CAN RESTORE WHAT  
HAS BEEN DESTROYED AND GIVE RELIEF TO THE SUFFERING.  
IF AS INDIVIDUALS WE ARE SELF-RELIANT, WE MUST AS A  
NATION ALSO LEARN TO BE SELF-RELIANT. THIS MEANS THAT  
THOSE OF US WHO HAVE NOT SUFFERED MUST GENEROUSLY HELP  
THOSE WHO HAVE SUFFERED...PAST CALAMITIES SHOWED HOW  
GENEROUS WE WERE TO THE VICTIMS OF MISFORTUNE. THIS  
DISASTER OUGHT TO DEMONSTRATE HOW MUCH MORE GENEROUS  
WE CAN BE, CONSIDERING THE MAGNITUDE OF THE DAMAGE...  
WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT HIS WILL BE THE CASE. THE  
SPIRIT OF GIVING IS A CORNERSTONE OF THE FILIPINO ETHOS.  
IT IS EXPRESSED IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS ON  
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ON THE REDISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH  
AMONG OTHERS...THIS NATIONAL SPIRIT IS BEING CALLED  
TO THE FORE ONCE MORE. THE LEADERSHIP HAS TO ORGANIZE  
THE ASSISTANCE EFFORT." PERHAPS COINCIDENTALLY, THE  
SAME EDITORIAL PAGE CARRIED A WASHINGTON POST PIECE  
BY JAY MATHEWS ENTITLED, "WHY THE CHINESE REFUSE  
OUTSIDE AID IN QUAKE DISASTER."  
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